

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONO HI
JCRC BARBERS PT HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: OREP
SUBJECT: CODEL MONTGOMERY-MEETINGS WITH SOUKTHAVONE KEOLA

1. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY HAD TWO SUBSTANTIVE ENCOUNTERS WITH SOUKTHAVONE KEOLA, ACTING UNDER SECRETARY (CHEF DE CABINET) IN THE LAO FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE FIRST CAME WHEN SOUKTHAVONE ENGAGED THE CHAIRMAN IN WHAT STARTED OUT AS INFORMAL CONVERSATION BEFORE THE VIEWING AND TURN-OVER OF THE FOUR SETS OF REMAINS AT 0830 AUGUST 26. SOUKTHAVONE TURNED THE DISCUSSION, HOWEVER, INTO A LENGTHY HARANGUE ABOUT THE DAMAGE DONE BY THE U.S. SIDE DURING THE WAR. HE KEPT PROTESTING THAT BOTH SIDES SHOULD FORGET THE PAST AND LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE, BUT HE WOULD THEN RETURN TO HIS THEME OF DAMAGE DONE DURING THE WAR AND THE NEED FOR U.S. AID TO REPAIR IT.

2. SOUKTHAVONE MADE THE FURTHER CHARGE THAT THE U.S.
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WAS SUPPORTING THE LAO INSURGENCY. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY SAID THAT HE DID NOT THINK THIS WAS THE CASE. THE CHARGE SAID THAT HE COULD SPEAK FOR THE ADMINISTRATION AND ASSURE SOUKTHAVONE AND HIS LAO COLLEAGUES THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO TRUTH WHATSOEVER IN THIS CHARGE. THE U.S. NOT ONLY DID NOT SUPPORT THE LAO INSURGENTS, BUT IT HAD NO CONTACT WITH THEM AT ALL.

3. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY TOLD SOUKTHAVONE ON THIS OCCASION AND ALSO DURING THEIR SECOND SUBSTANTIVE ENCOUNTER AT THE AIRPORT FAREWELL THAT THE U.S. WANTED TO MOVE THE MIA ISSUE AWAY FROM BEING THE MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEM IN LAO-U.S. RELATIONS. HE ADMITTED THAT THE QUESTION WOULD PROBABLY NEVER BE COMPLETELY RESOLVED, BUT IF THE LAO SIDE WOULD MAKE A SINCERE EFFORT, THEN MIA'S COULD BE PUT ASIDE AND PRIMARY ATTENTION GIVEN TO OTHER ISSUES.

4. TO ASSIST IN THIS EFFORT, CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY REMINDED SOUKTHAVONE OF THE SRV OFFER TO PROVIDE THE LPDR WITH MIA SEARCH ASSISTANCE OF THE LAO SHOULD REQUEST IT. CHAIRMAN MONTGOMERY ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE RECENT VIETNAMESE VISIT TO JCRC AND CIL HAD BEEN EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL AND INVITED THE LAO TO SEND A SIMILAR GROUP TO HAWAII. SOUKTHAVONE SAID HE WOULD SUBMIT THIS INVITATION TO QTE HIGHER AUTHORITY UNQTE. ROBERTS

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